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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 05131

SIPDIS
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ACTION: PAO
INFO: ECON POL AMB DCM

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PAO:WWROBERTSON
DRAFTED: PAO:THAMDI
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2868
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RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 005131

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA;
INR/NESA; INR/B; IIP/G/NEA-SA
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. AND HAMAS/GCC SUMMIT/IRAN'S
NUCLEAR PROGRAM/IRAQI ELECTIONS

¶1. Summary: A columnist in "Al-Bayan" asks why the United States considers Palestinian resistance an act of terror. Columnists in "Al Ittihad" and "Al-Bayan criticize the Gulf Summit as ineffective. English daily "Gulf News" comments on the GCC's concerns with Iran's nuclear program and allegations of fraud in Iraqi elections. End Summary.

¶2. Ahmed Omarabi, a columnist wrote under the headline "America penalizing democracy", in Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al Bayan," (circulation 90,000):

"Why is the United States against Palestinian armed resistance to the extent that it equates resistance with terrorism. International law recognizes this legitimate struggle as it aims to free a territory from foreign occupation."

¶3. Saudi columnist, Dr. Khalid Al Dakheel, writes under the headline "Is the GCC summit experiment a futile one?", in Abu Dhabi-based Arabic daily "Al Ittihad," (circulation 65,000):

"The GCC summit has become a boring subject in the past few years. After the summit is held and adjourned, GCC citizens do not feel its influence.. The last summit that was recently held, did not result in any useful outcomes or any thing that justified holding it."

¶4. UNDER THE HEADLINE "SUMMIT FOR REDUCING TENSIONS", DR. ALI AL-TARRAH, A KUWAITI PROFESSOR STATED IN ABU DHABI-BASED ARABIC DAILY "AL ITTIHAD," (CIRCULATION 65,000):

"As usual, the summit was held at the decided time and the leadership released new statements after conferring on classified issues. We do not know how executable these outcomes will be. The GCC summit is no different from any other Arab summit. with outcomes that stay locked up inside the Arab League's closet. The GCC countries need to have a forwarding thinking, methodical vision in order to tackle the issues at hand."

¶5. An unsigned editorial in English daily, "Gulf News" titled "Nuclear message with a difference," (circulation 95,000) states:

"The absence in the final communiqu of the Gulf Cooperation Council summit of any reference to Iran's nuclear program raised eyebrows. The implications of the program on the security and stability of this vital region have been discussed in detail during the summit, officials confirmed. But the final statement failed to reflect regional concerns, which were explicitly expressed by the UAE foreign minister at his press conference on Monday.."

"With regard to the three UAE islands, occupied since 1971 by Iran, the GCC urged the Islamic Republic to listen to the voice of wisdom and heed the calls to solve the issue through peaceful means. Now, the ball is in the Iranian court. Tehran must respond positively to these gestures in order to preserve the stability of the region, which has suffered from more than its share of wars and bloody conflicts.. The GCC states have never missed an opportunity to extend the olive branch to their neighbor. It is Iran's turn to respond. It is only Islamic to do so."

¶6. An unsigned editorial in English daily, "Gulf News" titled "Patience and cool heads now needed," (circulation 95,000) states:

"It is disappointing to note that even before the final results of the Iraq elections are declared, some Sunni leaders are calling for a reversal of the results. As yet there have been no indications of any malfeasance occurring at any of the polling stations or any other corrupt practice, although there were more than enough observers to the polling process to have raised any alarm should it have been necessary."

"Truth to tell, the Sunni Arabs were expecting a much better result than that which has so far been declared in Baghdad province. Most having boycotted the election for the transitional administration in January, were doubtless expecting a greater share of the vote than so far declared. However, to demand a reversal of the results is not the way forward for the unity of the nation. Polling problems have appropriate channels of recourse, and it is in that manner that they must be pursued."

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